

KING COUNTY BASELINE SURVEY RESULTS

DOWNTOWN SEATTLE TRANSIT TUNNEL CUSTOMER RESEARCH

The Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (DSTT) will close in 2005 to be retrofit for light rail. The closure will last two years and is expected to cause significant disruption to those traveling to and through downtown. As part of the planned mitigation efforts for this project, customers will be surveyed periodically about their levels of satisfaction with aspects of the downtown Seattle experience. The purpose is to see both how well mitigation is working and to hear ways mitigation efforts could be improved during construction.

The 2003 Rider/Nonrider Survey provided an opportunity to field-test core questions from proposed DSTT customer satisfaction research and to establish an early baseline from which to gauge later changes in perception and satisfaction. Because the Rider/Nonrider Survey is limited to King County residents, it does not reflect perceptions of other travelers to downtown.

For this report, regular users of downtown Seattle were formed into three groups—those who only work downtown (Work Only), those who only do other things downtown, such as shop, eat, go to sporting events, etc. (Play Only), and those who both work and play downtown (Work and Play).

Regular users are defined as King County residents who live in or make at least three trips a month to downtown Seattle. The few study participants who live downtown were grouped with those who come downtown. The questionnaire slightly

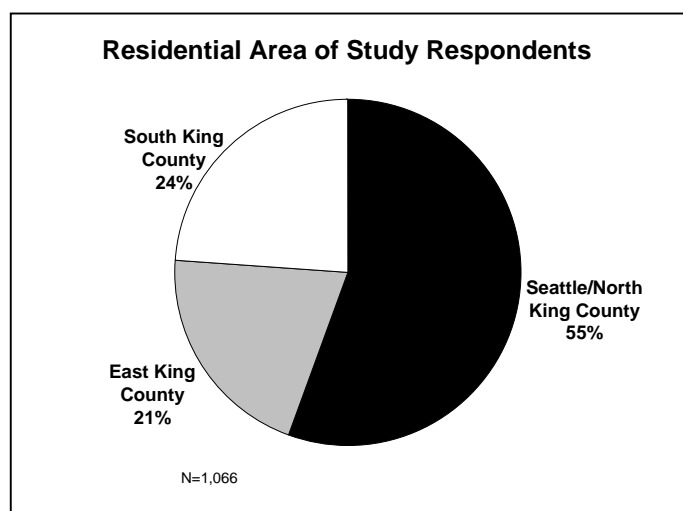
modified some questions for those living downtown to make them relevant. For example, “Do you go downtown for shopping” and “Do you shop downtown?”

The report first discusses general travel behavior of these groups in and around downtown along with demographics of the sample. The second part addresses their satisfaction levels with several aspects of being in and traveling through downtown. The tunnel closure evaluation plan calls for tracking of responses to these questions before, during, and after tunnel closure to help assess the ability of service, informational, and other measures planned to mitigate impacts of tunnel retrofit on travelers downtown.

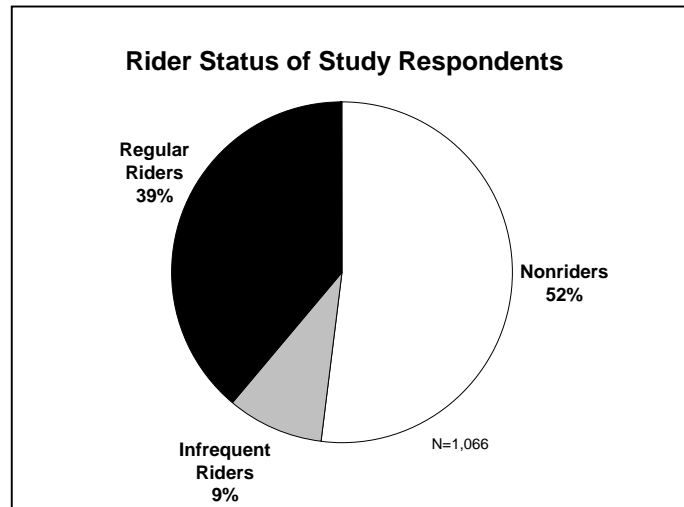
PART I—Travel to and Around Downtown Seattle

Altogether 44 percent of King County residents come to downtown Seattle three or more times a month. Of these 8.3 percent only work downtown, 50.6 percent only play downtown, and 41.1 percent both work and play downtown.

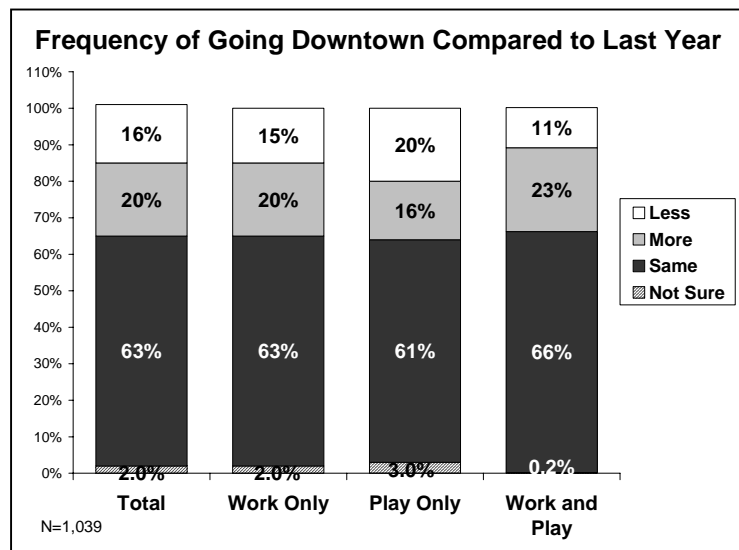
More than half of these downtown users (55 percent) live in Seattle/North County, while 24 percent and 21 percent live in south and east County areas, respectively.



Thirty-nine percent ride Metro five or more times a month (regular riders), 9 percent ride Metro but less frequently than five times a month (infrequent riders), and the majority (52 percent) are nonriders.



The majority of King County respondents report traveling to downtown about as often as they did last year (63 percent), while 20 percent report going downtown more often, and 16 percent report going downtown less often than last year.



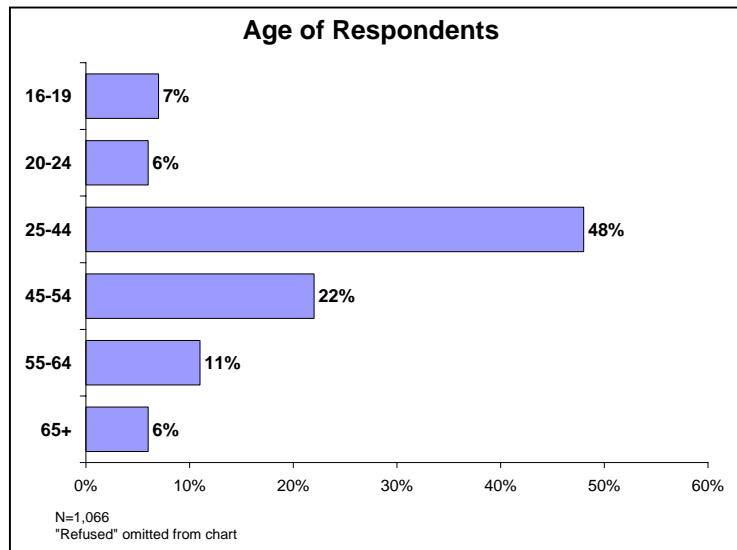
Among those going downtown less often than last year, 21 percent gave as their reason perceptions of downtown that may be affected by tunnel retrofit activities.

These included:

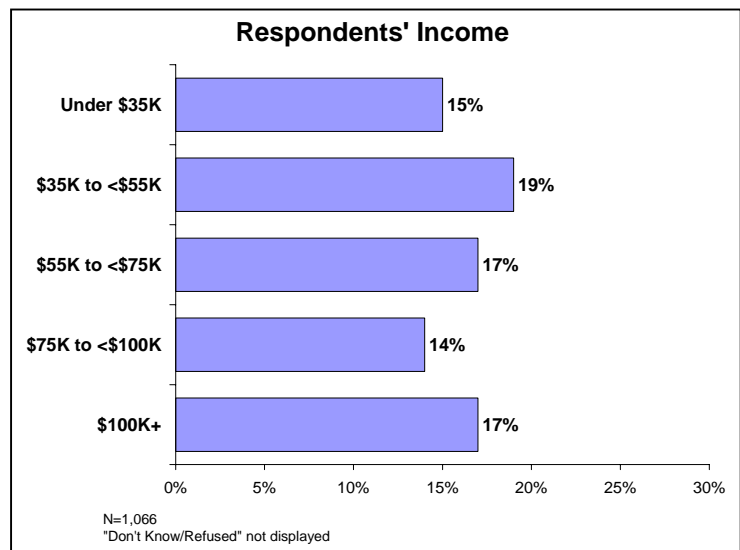
- Traffic congestion
- Lack of parking
- Parking costs
- Discomfort with the types of people encountered (drugs/homeless)
- Safety and security
- Crowding/hassle of getting around

Demographics

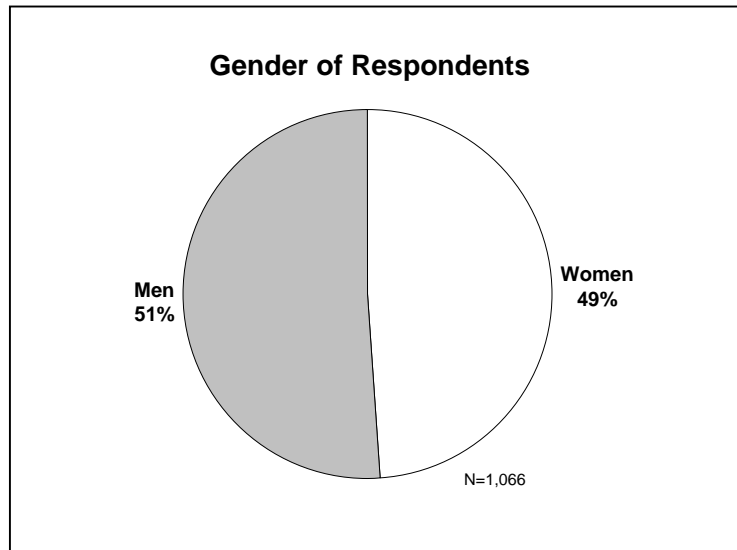
Age. Nearly half the respondents were between the ages of 25 and 44, with 22 percent from the 45-54 age group. Not surprisingly, the younger age groups and those 65+ were least represented in the respondent sample.



Income. Respondents were about equally represented in each of five income groups.



Gender. The gender distribution of the sample was equally split.

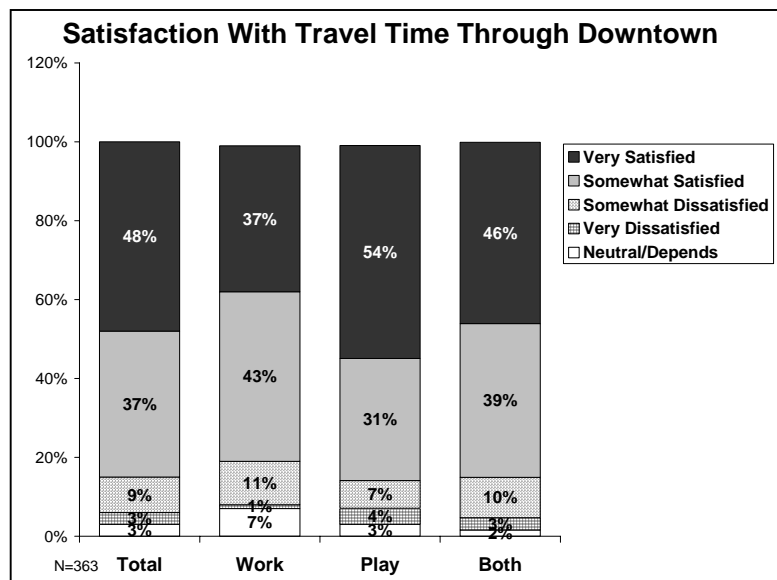


Part II—Satisfaction of Downtown Regular User Group

Respondents answered several questions about their satisfaction with aspects of Downtown Seattle.

Transit Users

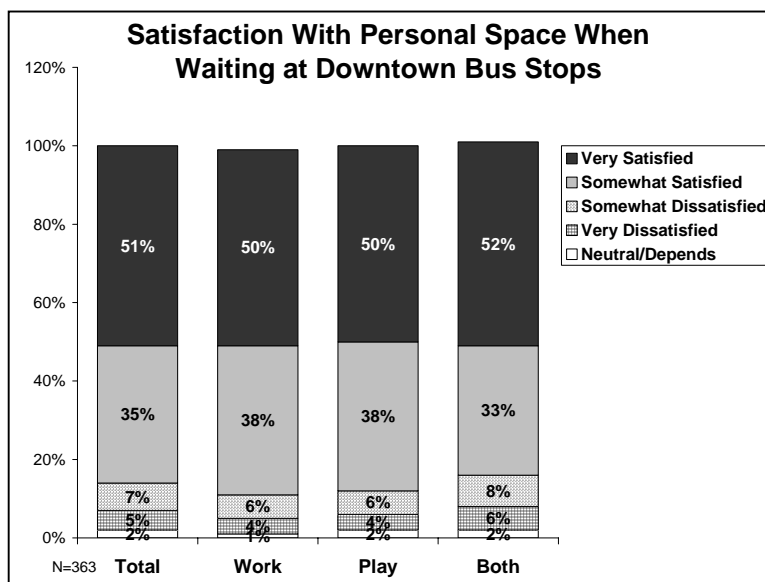
Travel Time Through Downtown by Bus. Overall 85 percent of regular and infrequent riders were satisfied with travel time by bus, while 12 percent were dissatisfied. Not too surprisingly, a higher



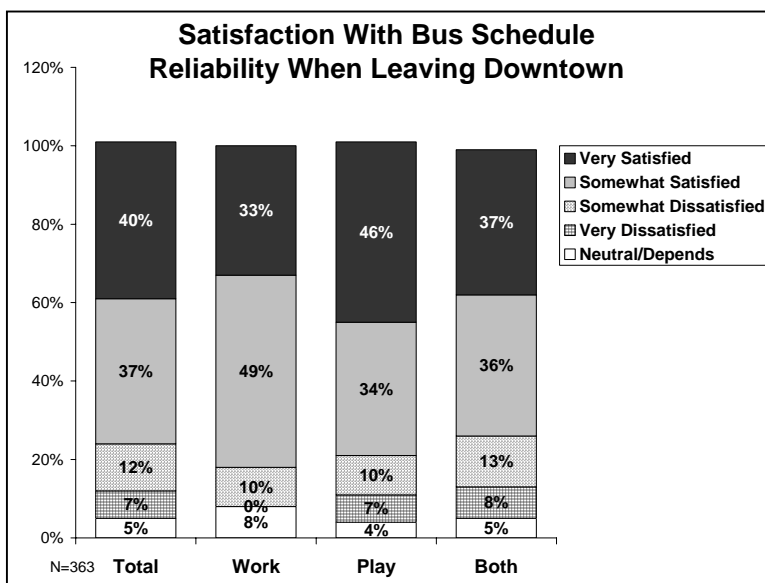
percentage of those who only play downtown were “very satisfied” with travel time by bus than were those who only work downtown (54 percent vs. 37 percent).

Personal Space When Waiting at Downtown Bus Stops.

Respondents overall were quite satisfied with personal space when waiting for buses (86 percent satisfied). Twelve percent were dissatisfied. The three groups were similar in their reported satisfaction.



Bus Schedule Reliability When Leaving Downtown. Overall, 77 percent of respondents were satisfied with bus schedule reliability when leaving downtown, while 19 percent were dissatisfied.



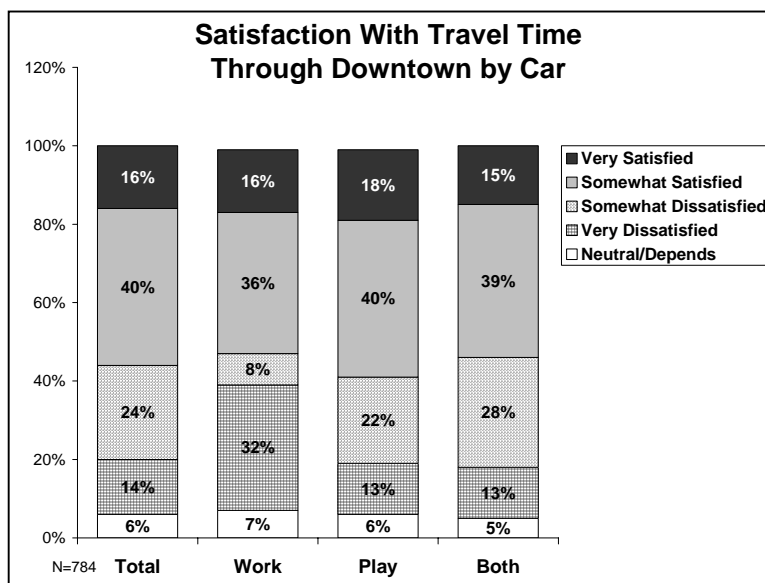
Those who only work downtown were less likely than those who play downtown to be “very satisfied” (33 percent vs. 46 percent, respectively).

Those who work and play were more likely than those who only work downtown to be dissatisfied (21 percent vs. 10 percent).

Car Users

Travel Time Through

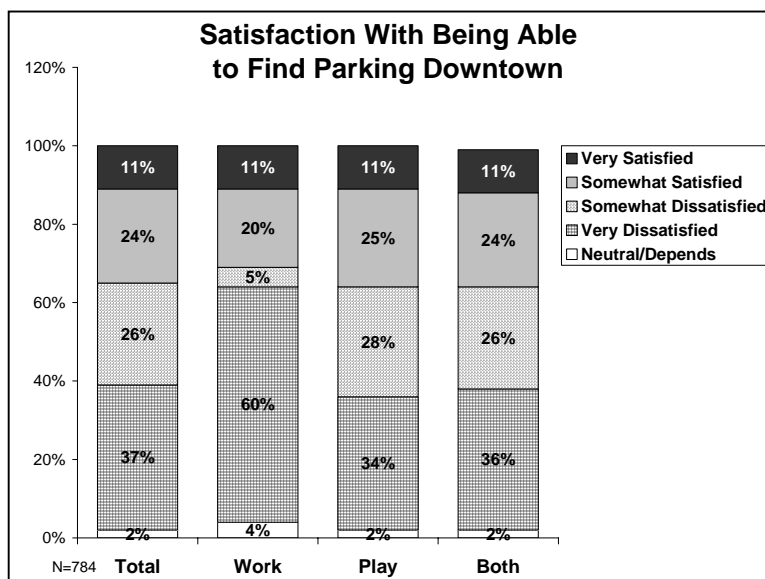
Downtown by Car. Overall, 56 percent of respondents who typically drive downtown were satisfied with travel time through downtown, while 38 percent were dissatisfied.



Those who only work downtown were more likely than either those who only play or those who both work and play downtown to be “very dissatisfied” with travel time downtown by car (32 percent vs. 13 percent each).

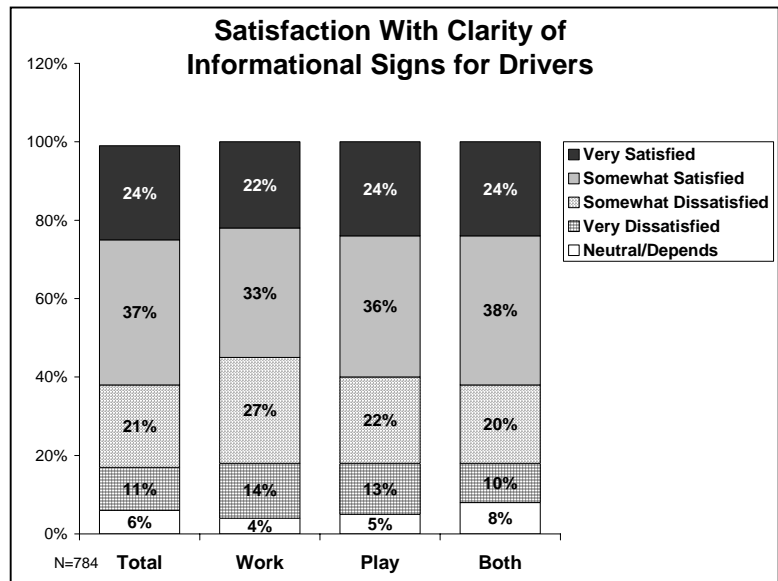
Being Able to Find Parking

Downtown. Overall, 63 percent of those using a car to get downtown were dissatisfied with being able to find parking, while just 36 percent were satisfied.



Those who only work downtown expressed the most dissatisfaction, significantly higher than either those who only play or those who both work and play (60 percent vs. 34 percent and 36 percent “very dissatisfied, respectively).

Clarity of Informational Signs for Drivers. The majority of respondents who typically drive downtown (61 percent) expressed satisfaction with signage and information signs telling drivers how to get around downtown, while 32 percent were dissatisfied.



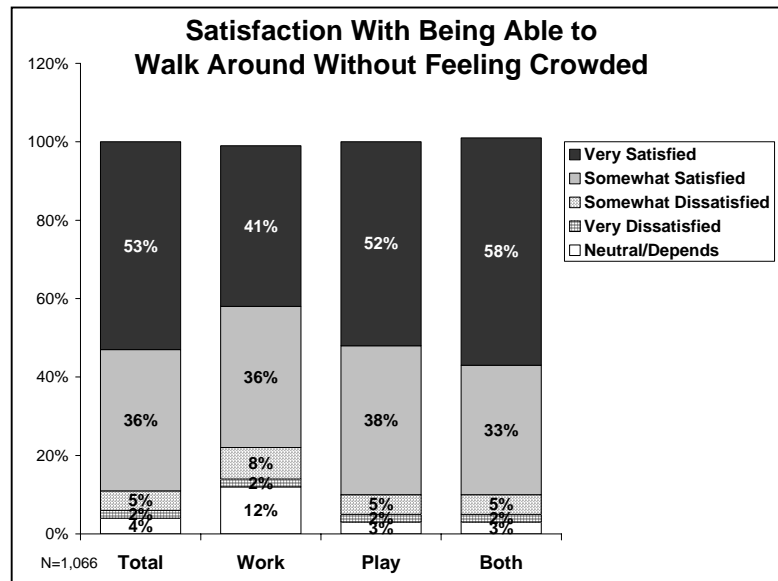
The three groups of downtown users were similar in their satisfaction levels.

All Downtown Users

Being Able to Walk Around Downtown Without Feeling

Crowded. Overall, 89 percent of respondents expressed satisfaction with being able to walk around without feeling crowded. Those who only play downtown or those who both work and play were more likely

to be satisfied than those who only work downtown (90 percent each vs. 76 percent).



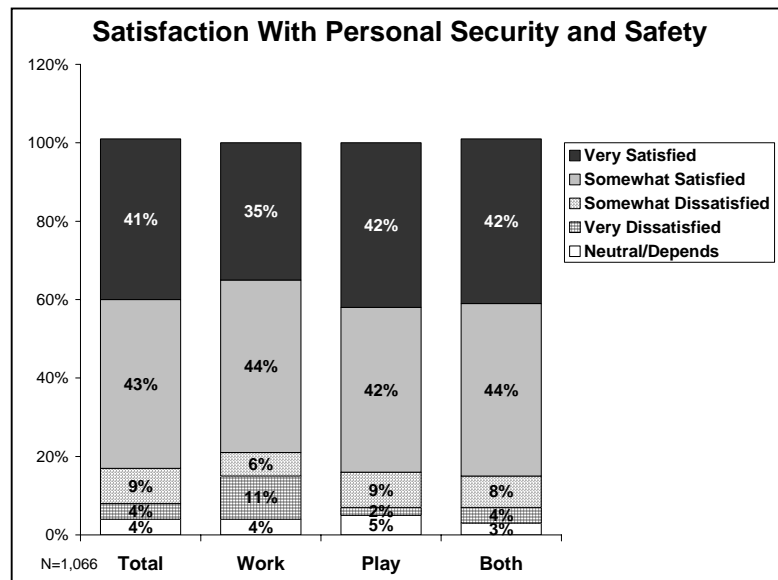
It appears that the lower satisfaction with getting around without feeling crowded among those who only work downtown is a result of lower satisfaction among workers coming downtown by car. When analyzed separately, transit commuters to downtown were equally likely as others to be satisfied (88 percent, 87 percent and 87 percent for those who work, play and both, respectively). Car commuters, however, were significantly less likely to be satisfied than were those who both work and play downtown or those who only play downtown (64 percent vs. 91 percent and 93 percent).

Personal Security and Safety.

A large majority of downtown regular users was satisfied with personal security downtown (84 percent), while 12 percent were dissatisfied.

Those who only work downtown were more likely than those

who only play downtown and those who both work and play downtown to be "very dissatisfied" (11 percent vs. 2 percent and 4 percent, respectively).



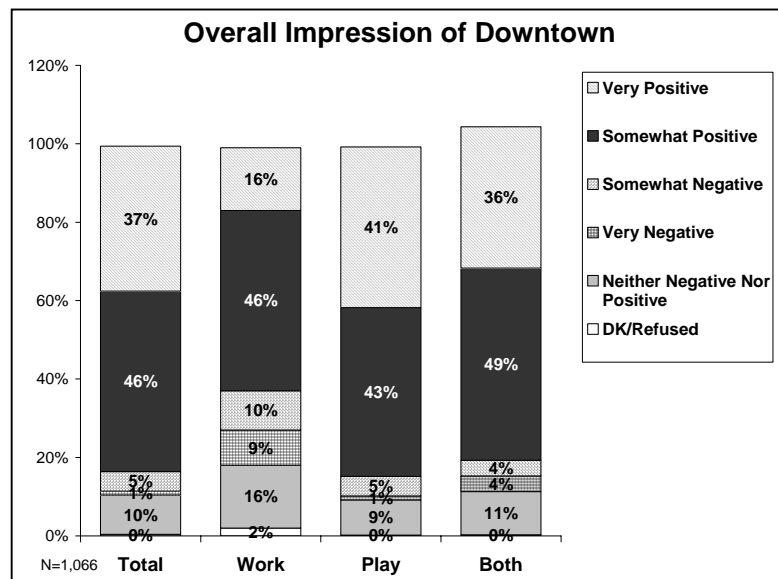
Overall Impression of

Downtown

"Based on your most recent experience with downtown Seattle, what is your overall impression of downtown? Would you say your view of downtown is:"

Overall, 83 percent of

respondents had a positive impression of downtown, while only 6 percent had a negative impression.



Those who only work downtown had the least positive view. They were significantly more likely than those who only play and those who both work and play downtown to have a negative impression (19 percent vs. 6 percent and 4 percent, respectively).

As would be expected, those who only played or both played and worked downtown had a significantly more positive impression than those who only work downtown (84 percent and 85 percent vs. 62 percent).

Rider/Nonrider Surveys in 2005 just after tunnel closure, in 2007 and in 2009 will track changes to this King County baseline. In conjunction with formal tunnel closure evaluation work, these surveys will help assess the effectiveness of mitigation efforts to maintain downtown King County user satisfaction and travel frequency among King County residents in the face of significant physical disruptions.